

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY of:
Extended Phase I Archaeological Studies
at the Old Porterville Fairgrounds
for a New Superior Courthouse
City of Porterville, Tulare County, California

Prepared for:

Judicial Council of California-Administrative Office of the Courts
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September 2011

National Archaeological Database Information

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Report Date: September 2011

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Contract No: GANDA Job 6225

U.S.G.S. Quad: Porterville 1:24,000; Success Dam 1:24,000

Acreage: 7.75 acres

Key words: Tulare County; Old Porterville Fairgrounds; Porterville Superior Courthouse; City of Porterville; Tule River Indian Tribe; human remains; Pioneer Ditch

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report identifies the locations of cultural resources, which are confidential. As nonrenewable resources, archaeological sites can be significantly impacted by disturbances that can affect their cultural, scientific, and artistic values. Disclosure of this information to the public may be in violation of both federal and state laws. To discourage the damage of vandalism and artifact looting, cultural resources locations should be kept confidential and report distribution restricted to those who need to know. California state laws that apply include, but are not limited to, Government Code Sections 6250 *et seq.* and 6254 *et seq.*

NOTICE TO INTERESTED PARTIES:

The September 2011 report, Extended Phase I Archaeological Studies at the Old Porterville Fairgrounds for a New Superior Courthouse, City of Porterville, Tulare County, California, is confidential information and not intended for public distribution. The Administrative Office of the Courts is releasing the report's Management Summary to inform interested parties and the public of the results of the June 2011 Phase I surveys in Porterville at the proposed courthouse site.

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

At the request of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), Garcia and Associates (GANDA), under contract with Environmental Resources Management (ERM), completed Extended Phase I archaeological subsurface testing at the old Porterville Fairgrounds for the new Porterville Superior Courthouse Project in the City of Porterville, Tulare County, California. Beginning June 15, 2011, GANDA archaeologists excavated five (5) backhoe trenches, thirty-seven (37) shovel test probes (STPs), and thirty-four (34) auger holes within the approximately 7.75 acre parcel. In total, GANDA excavated approximately 71.5 cubic meters of soil.

Of the thirty-seven (37) excavated STPs, two were positive for prehistoric cultural materials, which yielded one piece of ceramic pottery, two pieces of talc schist (soapstone) and two associated burned bird bone fragments. Archaeologists did not observe prehistoric cultural materials in the thirty-four (34) auger holes or five backhoe trenches.

An area within the former Porterville Fairgrounds property indicated by Porterville historian Bill Horst to contain a previously identified human burial and associated glass trade beads was scraped with a flat blade on a backhoe to a depth of approximately 65 centimeters below the ground surface. Mr. Horst graciously agreed to visit the project site to try to pinpoint the location of the burial he observed nearly 45 years ago. With his assistance, GANDA's geoarchaeologist Matthew Steinkamp investigated several soil anomalies during backhoe scraping within an area measuring approximately 671 square meters (7227 square feet), but there were no indications of human remains or associated glass trade beads. After consultation with representatives of the Tule River Indian Tribe, GANDA archaeologists decided that due diligence in the pursuit of the burial had been provided and they terminated excavation on June 24, 2011. It is surmised that the burial may have been previously removed during utility trenching or other construction performed over the years.

Although seven STPs (8, 12, 33, 34, 35, 37, and 42) and one auger hole (S) yielded bone fragments, none were of human origin. Most of the bone fragments displayed saw marks, suggesting they were from butchered animals. Linda Baker, project osteologist, examined the bone fragments and confirmed they were all faunal (e.g., bovine (cow), equine (horse), porcine (pig), fowl (chicken), and rodent), and not human. All faunal bones were identified within a historic context except for two bird bone fragments observed in STP 42 at 80 centimeters (31.5 inches) below surface. The bone fragments were recovered in context with two talc-schist (soapstone) fragments, which suggests prehistoric cultural activity.

The previously observed human burial and related artifacts has been designated Feature 1 within the former fairgrounds property. Given the potential for human remains and cultural material within the project area, GANDA recommends monitoring by a qualified archaeologist during all future ground disturbances.

In the event human remains are encountered, the monitoring archaeologist or construction crew should adhere to the provisions of sections 7052 and 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code. Section 7052 states that disturbance of Indian cemeteries is a felony. Section 7050.5

requires that construction or excavation be stopped near discovered human remains until the coroner can determine whether the remains are those of a Native American. If the remains are Native American, Section 7052 states that the County Coroner must contact the California Native American Heritage Commission.

In addition, one previously recorded cultural resource in the project area, the Pioneer Ditch (P-54-004354)—purportedly one of the oldest extant canals in California, was recommended as eligible for the NRHP and CRHR for its association with Native Americans from the Tule River Reservation. It runs underground throughout the entire north end of project area, and according to the current plans, it will not be impacted by the project. However, construction should take into consideration the Pioneer Ditch, and the plans should be designed to protect and preserve this resource. If the proposed construction changes and avoidance is not feasible, then mitigation measures, such as Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documentation, and/or other measures, would be warranted.